

*Psychology B57
Memory & Cognition
Winter Term 2000*

Classes: Mondays 3-5 and Wednesdays 4-5 in S309

Webpage: <http://psych.utoronto.ca/~joordens/courses/PsyB57>

Instructor: Steve Joordens (<http://www.scar.utoronto.ca/~joordens>)
S 566
joordens@psych.utoronto.ca
Office hours: Tuesdays 9 – 11 am, or by appointment

TAs: Erin Sheard & Mike Dodd
S 567B
Office hours:

This course is meant to provide an introduction to an area of psychology termed Cognitive Psychology. By my definition, cognitive psychologists attempt to understand the processes and structures of the brain, with particular emphasis on the processes.

Along the way we will consider such issues as how information enters and becomes represented in the brain, how the processes of attention work, how memories are represented and retrieved, the distinction between conscious and unconscious processes, and how all this comes together to allow us to make decisions and to generally function within in a highly complex environment.

Cognitive psychology is relatively young branch of psychology that attempts to study mental processes using highly scientific methods. This typically involves measuring brain processes indirectly, by examining how performance is effected by various manipulations. Given this, an understanding of the logic, methods and assumptions of cognitive psychology also forms an integral part of this course.

Course Text

The textbook we will use in this course is Reisberg's book entitled "Cognition: Exploring the Science of the Mind" (first edition).

I will be following the structure of this book fairly closely, but I will not present everything that is in the text, and I will present some things in class that are not in the text. Given that the exams will be based on my classes, you are encouraged to attend all classes if you want to perform as well as possible in the class.

Course Webpage

The webpage for this course provides a number of things to assist you while taking this course. The highlights are mentioned below.

First, I prefer not to talk to the tops of heads as students frantically take notes in class. Because of this I will try my best to make my class overheads available, as powerpoint slides, prior to each class. These overheads can be downloaded and printed, or viewed directly on the web. The optimal situation is for you to print out copies of the notes and bring them to class, leaving you to listen, think, and ask questions during the lectures. Note that these overheads do not provide a very good alternative to coming to class as they are not "blow by blow" lectures ... they are more like skeletons, with the meat provided in the lectures.

Second, there is an online anonymous question box. Some of you may be shy about asking questions in class. This is a way to ask me course related questions without me having any idea who you are. I will typically take up the questions at the beginning of each lecture.

Third, I will post your midterm marks online when they are available, meaning you do not have to make a special trip into campus, or figure out where they are posted.

Fourth, I will include links to things that I think are relevant to the class. This might be links to additional materials, demonstrations, etc.

Evaluation

We will cover the material in the same order as it is covered in the text, and we will discuss all chapters, though I may focus more strongly on some chapters than on others.

Your mark in this course will be determined on the basis of two midterm exams. The first will be on February 9th, will be worth 40% of the mark, and will cover Chapters 1 through 6.

The second midterm will be during the final exam period, will be worth 60% of your final mark, and will cover Chapters 7 through 14.

The exams will be composed of some multiple choice, and some short answer questions. The extent of each will depend partially on the ongoing TA strike. If the strike is over prior to the midterm in question, then it will be composed of approximately 65% multiple choice, and approximately 35% short answer. However, if the TAs are still out at the time of the midterm in question, it will be composed of approximately 90% multiple choice, and 10% short answer.